Abstract: These audiotape recordings by members of the Delaware Folklore society feature folk tales, narratives, songs, sermons, and discussions of folklore. The recordings provide a glimpse into the work of an organization dedicated to preserving and studying the folk heritage of Delaware.
Descriptive Summary

Identification: MSS 695
Creator: Delaware Folklore Society.
Title: Delaware Folklore Society audio recordings
Inclusive Dates: 1950-1955
Extent: 8 1/4" open reel(s)
Language: Materials in English and Finnish.

Administrative Information

Citation: MSS 695, Delaware Folklore Society audio recordings, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware.
Shelving Summary: Shelved in SPEC MSS Media Reels
Location: Special Collections, University of Delaware Library Newark, Delaware 19717-5267 Phone: 302-831-2229 Fax: 302-831-6003 URL: http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/
Source: Gift of the Delaware Folklore Society, March 1956.
Processing: Processed and encoded by E. Evan Echols, July 2014.
Access Restrictions: The collection is open for research.
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Historical Note

The Delaware Folklore Society was founded to document and preserve Delaware folklore, folk sayings, customs, narratives and folk history, songs, and information about individuals and communities. Membership in the society was open to anyone interested in any phase of the folklore of Delaware. The organization's primary medium of communication was the Delaware Folklore Bulletin, which was published by the Institute of Delaware History and Culture.

The Delaware Folklore Society developed out of a conference on folklore held in the spring of 1950 on the campus of the University of Delaware under the sponsorship of the University's Institute of Delaware History and Culture. Organization of the society took place at a subsequent meeting, in Dover, Delaware, on June 5, 1950. The founding officers of the Delaware Folklore Society after its founding were University of Delaware professor John A. Munroe (president), Georgetown state senator Harold W. T. Purnell (vice president), and Assistant State Archivist Charles W. Dickens (secretary). Additional members of the executive committee were Delaware Historian Anthony Higgins, Dover-based historic preservationist Mable Lloyd Ridgely, and Sussex County state representative William T. Bennett. Other early members include R. O. Bausman, chairman of the Institute of Delaware History and Culture, Arthur R. Dunlap, secretary of the same institute, and Leon de Valinger, Jr., state archivist.

According to the minutes of the executive committee recorded on March 9, 1956, by John R. Ernest, the Society donated their tapes and minutes to the University of Delaware Library.

Sources:
Scope and Content Note

These audiotape recordings by the Delaware Folklore society feature folk tales, narratives, songs, sermons, and discussions of folklore. The recordings provide a glimpse into the work of an organization dedicated to preserving and studying the folk heritage of Delaware.

Recordings by the Delaware Folklore Society include "negro folk tales" as told by New York State educator Louis C. Jones; Finnish language choral singing from the Iron Hill area, recorded or organized by University of Delaware Professor John A. Munroe; and stories told by Nathaniel "Fan" Tingle, an elderly African American resident of Oak Orchard, Sussex County, Delaware. The recordings also feature talks by the collectors of folklore and songs, including New York State educator Louis C. Jones and Alan Lomax, musicologist and field collector of American folk music.

The collection features several oral history interviews including an interview with two residents of Cedar Swamp, Blackbird Hundred, Delaware, on local legends. There is also an interview with John Ernest of Newark, Delaware, in which he discussed Chesapeake Bay "show boats" and other traveling shows he visited as a child, church attendance, local customs, and his frank views of African-Americans. The final tape in the collection features an interview and sermon by Reverend Andrew Gaston of Newark, Delaware. Gaston was an employee of the Continental Diamond-Fibre Company, and the son of a former slave and a free woman. In his interview, he discussed his life, children, education, working railroad, and his time in Savannah, Georgia, where he was born. The tape also includes readings by Charles W. Eaton and students in oral interpretation and speech.

In addition to John Munroe, the tapes were recorded by Delaware author and historian C.A. Weslager, historian Anthony Higgins, and journalist Bill Frank. Additional information regarding the content of the audiotapes was handwritten on their containers and is included in the scope note of each tape where possible.
Selected Search Terms

**Corporate Names**

Delaware Folklore Society.

**Topical Terms**

African Americans--Delaware.

Folklore--Delmarva Peninsula.

Finns--Delaware.

**Geographic Names**

Delaware.

Sussex County (Del.)

**Form/Genre Terms**

Folk tales.

Sermons.

1/4 inch audio tape.

Oral histories (document genres)

**Personal Contributors**

Frank, Bill, 1905-1989.


Munroe, John A. (John Andrew), 1914-2006.

Tingle, Nathaniel, active 1950.


**Related Materials in this Repository**
Detailed Description of the Collection

Negro folk tales, William Faulkner and Talk by Louis C. Jones on folklore and folk culture, 1950 May, 1952 March 14 [MSS0695_0001]


How Fan Stole the Middlin’, etc., 1952 [MSS0695_0002]

Fan Tingle with commentary by Charles Dickens. Recorded by Anthony Higgins and Bill Frank. The container includes a note that the original is housed at "Archives, Dover." See Transcript in Del. Folklore Bulletin, October 1952. Side two features examples of bird calls, recorded by unknown person.

Fan Tingle, 1954 July [MSS0695_0003]


Finnish Singers, undated [MSS0695_0004]

John Munroe. Arranged choral singing from the Iron Hill area of Newark, Delaware.

Talk by Louis C. Jones, Alan Lomax, experiences as a collector and songs, Jack Earnest, Robert Cane, 1950 May [MSS0695_0005]

Includes songs sung with guitar.

Cedar Swamp, Blackbird Hundred, New Castle County, local legends, 1954 August 3 [MSS0695_0006]

Recorded by C.A. Weslager. Includes an interview with Frederich Bell and another resident Blackbird Hundred, Delaware. Local legends regard the Mexican-American War, buried gold, the place name legend "Hangman's Neck", and the ballad "Edward Teach," sung by Frederich Bell with guitar.

Oral history interview with John Ernest, 1955 May [MSS0695_0007]

Interview and sermon by Rev. Andrew Gaston and readings by students in oral interpretation/speech, 1955 May 16 [MSS0695_0008]